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ACTION IO-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	A-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	DS-00
	EAP-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	LAB-01	VCE-00	NSAE-00	OIC-02	PER-00	TEST-00	USIE-00
	IIP-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/006W	
				-----AD8FB4	131100Z	/38	

FM AMEMBASSY HANOI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6432  
INFO AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY  
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS HANOI 001189

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PGOV KPAO OIIP VM HUMANR

SUBJECT: ARMY DAILY SEEKS TO PROMOTE GOOD RELATIONS WITH U.S.

11. (U) SUMMARY. THE PEOPLE'S ARMY DAILY IS DETERMINED TO HELP STRENGTHEN BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND MIGHT BE WILLING TO USE PAS-PRODUCED MATERIALS, ITS EDITOR TOLD AMBASSADOR ON MAY 9. THE EDITOR EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT ANTI-SRV VIETNAMESE IN THE U.S. AND THE IMPACT OF THE VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS ACT. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) MAJOR GENERAL NGUYEN QUANG THONG, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE PEOPLE'S ARMY NEWSPAPER (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN), TOLD AMBASSADOR, PAO, AND POL/C ON MAY 9 THAT HIS NEWSPAPER'S  
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EDITORIAL STANCE WAS AIMED AT STRENGTHENING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND FRIENDSHIP, INCLUDING WITH THE U.S., CONSISTENT WITH THE MUTUAL INTERESTS OF BOTH COUNTRIES. HE SAID THAT THAT THE PAPER HAD REPORTED ON POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, ESPECIALLY ON DIPLOMATIC AND COMMERCIAL TIES AS WELL AS US HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE. HE CLAIMED THAT THE PAPER FOLLOWED AN "INDEPENDENT" EDITORIAL POLICY NOT DIRECTLY GUIDED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OR THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM'S (CPV) PROPAGANDA ORGAN. HE ADMITTED THAT "IN REALITY" HIS EDITORIAL LINE "REFLECTED" OVERALL DIRECTIONS AND TRENDS SET BY THE CPV, HOWEVER.

13. (U) WHEN GENERAL THONG ADMITTED THAT SOME OF THE PAPER'S SIGNED COMMENTARIES WERE FROM "GUEST WRITERS" INCLUDING FOREIGNERS, THE AMBASSADOR ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF USING ARTICLES PROVIDED BY THE EMBASSY. THONG SAID THAT THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE, IF THEY WERE CONSISTENT WITH THE ABOVE-MENTIONED EDITORIAL POLICY. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THE VALUE IN EXPANDING UNDERSTANDING IN VIETNAM OF THE US VIEW OF THE RELATIONSHIP, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF DISPELLING SOME OF THE "DISTRUST" OF THE U.S. STILL SOMETIMES REFLECTED IN THE PAPER'S SIGNED COMMENTARIES.

14. (U) GENERAL THONG NOTED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THERE WAS LITTLE COVERAGE OF VIETNAM BY THE US PRESS. THE AMBASSADOR AGREED THAT THIS WAS TRUE, AND STRESSED THAT VIETNAM'S PROBLEM WAS NOT THAT PEOPLE IN THE U.S. WERE UNDERTAKING "SINISTER PLOTS" AGAINST VIETNAM SUCH AS "PEACEFUL EVOLUTION," BUT RATHER THAT SO FEW PEOPLE IN THE U.S. WERE  
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INTERESTED IN VIETNAM AT ALL. HE NOTED THAT ONE BY-PRODUCT OF EXPANDED TRADE RELATIONS WOULD BE THAT MORE COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS IN THE U.S. WOULD HAVE A STAKE IN THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, ARGUE VIETNAM'S CASE TO CONGRESS, AND INCREASE AND BROADEN THE BILATERAL FRIENDSHIP.

15. (U) GENERAL THONG POINTED TO SOME VIETNAMESE IN THE U.S. WHO WERE ANTI-SRV, AND POINTED TO THE VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS ACT AS AN EXAMPLE OF THEIR NEGATIVE EFFORTS. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT VOCAL INTEREST GROUPS IN THE U.S. CAN OFTEN HAVE AN IMPACT DISPROPORTIONATE TO THEIR NUMBERS IN SECURING PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION THAT EXPRESSES CONGRESSIONAL OPINION WITH LIMITED PRACTICAL EFFECT, ESPECIALLY IN THE ABSENCE OF LOCAL CONSTITUENTS WHO OPPOSE IT. GENERAL THONG EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE LONGER-TERM EFFECT OF SUCH RESOLUTIONS AND LAWS WOULD BE TO SHAPE USG POLICY, NOT JUST EXPRESS CONGRESSIONAL OPINIONS. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT, IN THE 21ST CENTURY, ALL COUNTRIES MUST GET USED TO INCREASED ATTENTION FROM ONE ANOTHER. GENERAL THONG WENT ON

TO CRITICIZE US REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL  
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AS SOMETIMES SLANDEROUS AND NOT REFLECTING  
THE REAL SITUATION IN VIETNAM.

16. (U) COMMENT: THE MAY 10 EDITION OF QUAN DOI NHAN DAN  
REPORTED FAVORABLY ON THE AMBASSADOR'S VISIT ON ITS BACK  
PAGE (INTERNATIONAL), HIGHLIGHTING THAT GENERAL THONG HAD  
TOLD HIM THE NEWSPAPER WAS RESOLVED TO FIGHT AGAINST  
WRONGFUL VIEWPOINTS THAT GO AGAINST THE NORMALIZATION  
PROCESS OF VIETNAM-US RELATIONS. ON THE FRONT PAGE,  
HOWEVER, WAS ANOTHER SIGNED COMMENTARY LAMBASTING US  
ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES FOR DISTORTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS  
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SITUATION VIETNAM, IMPOSING "IRRATIONAL CONDITIONS" ON THE  
RELATIONSHIP, AND REVIEWING ALLEGED ACTIVITIES OF THE US  
MILITARY DURING THE WAR THAT HAD VIOLATED VIETNAMESE HUMAN  
RIGHTS. OUR ONGOING DIALOGUE WITH QUAN DOI NHAN DAN STILL  
HAS A LONG WAY TO GO, BUT WE WILL LOOK FORWARD TO TESTING  
GENERAL THONG'S APPARENT OFFER TO USE MORE PAS-PRODUCED  
MATERIALS.  
BURGHARDT

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